MAIN STORY

When the police personnel dumped on the table the contents of the wallet that her mother was carrying when she was murdered by her father, the first thing to fall was the perimeter, a document that ordered the aggressor to keep distance from his victim, recalls Sofía Rodríguez daughter of Noemí Cristina Rodríguez, murdered by her ex-partner on May 18, 2019

"It didn't do him any good to have the role there. She carried it like a shield, it seemed to her that if she had it there nothing was going to happen to her," laments Rodríguez (CQ).

Argentina has had a law against violence against women since 2009 (CQLink). Femicides have been punishable by life imprisonment since 2012 (CQ Link) and since 2019 there has been a Ministry specialized in combating gender violence (CQLink). Despite these measures, the number of femicide victims remains stable, with a slight downward trend, according to official data (CQ Link), and a slight upward trend according to independent observatories (CQLink).

"The main problem is that despite all the legislation that existed, the law is not well applied. Mommy reported 3 times," says Rodriguez (CQ).

In the country there are a variety of protection measures for people in situations of gender-based violence. Some, such as panic buttons and mobile apps, allow security forces to be immediately notified of a risky situation. Others, the dual devices, ankle bracelets for aggressors and bracelets or sensors for whistleblowers, automatically notify the victim and the authorities when the aggressor violates the prohibition of approach, explains Laurana Malacalza, Undersecretary for the Comprehensive Approach to Gender-Based Violence (CQLinkSourceSheet)

The Ministry (CQ) is also working on the creation and strengthening of Territorial Centers for Gender and Diversity Policies, spaces for assistance, training and shelter for those who suffer gender-based violence (CQLink) and made agreements with all Mercosur member countries, so that protection measures are respected in all countries without the need for new complaints. according to Malacalza (CQ).

Even so, the official acknowledges that much remains to be done.

"The numbers of femicide and the numbers of gender-based violence in our country are very high. It is a social problem of a very complex magnitude that has to be accompanied by a very strong cultural change and a hierarchy of policies against gender-based violence," says Malacalza (CQ).

And she argues that it is necessary for the justice system to be trained in a gender perspective.

"Most of the difficulties faced by people who report situations of violence have to do with access to justice," says Malacalza (CQ).

Ada Beatriz Rico (CQSourceSheet), co-founder and president of La Casa del Encuentro, the association (CQ Link) that created and sustains the country's first femicide observatory (CQLink), has been counting the victims of gender-based violence since 2008 and says that the number of victims and complaints is almost identical every year.

"It shouldn't be like this because the Judiciary is supposed to protect the woman who filed a complaint and who obtained a precautionary measure, and the reality is that they don't protect her," laments Rico (CQ).

An example of this is the case of Melissa Julieta Kumber, a police officer murdered by her ex-partner, also a police officer in 2019 (CQVallejos). Melissa had denounced the femicide and managed to get the justice system to impose a restraining order, but it was not enough, laments her mother, Claudia Vallejos (CQSourcesheet+Link).

"It was not enough and I believe that the only measure that could save a woman from femicide is that when the woman denounces it, it (the aggressor) is arrested and thoroughly investigated. I get tired of telling girls who report, they put the perimeter on them, the panic button and they end up killing them anyway," says Vallejos (CQ).

Rico(CQ) explains that protective devices such as panic buttons, apps, and even ankle bracelets are devices that have their limitations and flaws. Therefore, from their perspective, the most effective thing to do is to work on prevention

"We should work and deepen to accompany women earlier, to empower them earlier, because after that it is too late," says Rico(CQ).

Rodríguez, for her part, believes that only immediate arrests could help

women in their mother's situation and that it is urgent that the state and society take action to eradicate gender-based violence.

"I feel that what happened to me has no cure, it just goes silent and sometimes it reopens," concludes Rodríguez(CQ).

In Mexico, during 2022, 3,754 deaths of women were registered, of which only 947 (or 33.7%) were investigated as femicides and the rest as intentional homicides, according to the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (SESNSP). For 2023, 2312 violent deaths of women have been recorded, of which only 572 are classified as femicide. (CQ_LINK)

For Leticia Bonifaz Alfonzo (CQ_HojaFuentes), a lawyer and human rights expert, the problem lies in the poor functioning of the systems of both the police and the Public Prosecutor's Office.

"This results in poorly put together files that reach the judges, there is a very high rate of impunity, that is that problem," Bonifaz Alfonzo said

Martha Figueroa Mier (CQ_HojaFuentes), feminist lawyer, defender of women's rights and member of the National Observatory of Femicide in Chiapas explains that Femicidal Violence and the need to carry out actions for its eradication have been recognized in International Conventions and Treaties ratified by our country and in National Laws.

"In the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women of Belém do Pará (CQ_LINK), instead of stopping at the definition of "eradicate", they do not fight against violence, the objective is to eradicate violence and to achieve this it is necessary to prevent, attend to, punish and this is taken up again in the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence," Figueroa Mier explains.

The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV) was published in 2007 in the Official Gazette of the Federation and contains the guiding principles for the access of all women to a life free of violence, which are: legal equality between women and men, respect for women's human dignity, non-discrimination and freedom of women. (CQ_LINK). This is the origin of the classification of the crime of **femicide** in the Federal Penal Code in 2012, and the Gender Violence

Alerts (AVG) as the set of emergency government actions to confront and eradicate femicidal violence in certain territories of our country.

In Mexico, there are 25 Declarations of Alert on Gender Violence against Women (AVGM) declared by the Ministry of the Interior, which contain preventive, security and justice actions to address violence against women. (CQ_LINK).
On November 18, 2016, the National System for the Prevention, Attention and Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (SNPASVM) decreed the "*Gender Violence Alert" (AVG) in Chiapas* in accordance with Article 22 of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence.

"Gender-based violence alerts have been a key mechanism to force authorities to comply with the law. It was there, but it wasn't attended to and I think that having a mechanism that civil society can force the authorities to do what they were not doing in terms of attention to violence is a fundamental tool," explains Ana Yeli Pérez Garrido, legal advisor to the OCNF and director of the organization Justicia Pro Persona A.C.

Among the actions of the AVG, there are prevention measures. One of them refers to "Designing an intercultural educational strategy on women's human rights and gender perspective for the transformation of cultural patterns and the prevention of violence through identification, abstention and denunciation. To this end, a permanent programme of workshops on gender-based violence and sexuality should be established in public and private schools for adolescents at the secondary and preparatory levels. Likewise, the staff of public and private educational centers should be trained with theoretical and practical tools, in order to detect cases of girls or adolescents who find themselves in a situation of violence in a timely manner." (CQ_LINK)

For Pérez Garrido, the first thing that has been done is to influence the regulatory frameworks that sanction violence and then the institutional capacities to deal with it, but that does not mean that there is or has been investment at the same time in the issue of prevention.

"When we talk about the punishment of femicide, we are not preventing femicide, that has not been our strategy and neither has it been the

authorities, nor do I see that there are many proposals where it is said what we are doing to reverse this violence that permeates culture, society and has not been invested in the education of society. not even thinking about a society that can transform itself, it is necessary to really invest in public policies aimed at the younger population," adds Pérez Garrido

"Prevention in Chiapas is mainly in poorly thought out, poorly planned campaigns, which do not have operational support, do not have resources," says Figueroa Mier.

She adds that it is necessary to generate adequate prevention strategies, according to the contexts in which women live in the different states of the country, and that these education campaigns are carried out in an adequate way by prepared, sensitive people, with a human rights perspective.

The curricular organization of the Educational Plan of this six-year term, in a transversal way in all fields there are seven axes that are called articulating axes, one of them is gender equality and another is that of inclusion, where respect for diversity is spoken of and diversity of class, sex, gender, etc. ethnicity, language, culture, ability, immigration status and religion. There is talk of questioning the patriarchal and heterosexual Eurocentric vision of reality, explains Lupita Albores, a teacher with 40 years of experience who works in teacher training.

In 2011, there was the Teacher Training Program to Prevent Violence against Women (CQ_LINK) and in the last administration there was the National School Coexistence Program (CQ_LINK), which talks about healthy school coexistence to avoid bullying and one of its pillars is gender equality.

"This model is focused, above all, on issues of coexistence, of reconstruction of the social fabric, in the curricular framework (CQ_LINK) it is defined that the human right to education involves an education for a life free of violence and personal integrity," says Albores.
(CQ_LINK)

She adds that the contents of the previous curricula did not mention patriarchy, much less gender diversity.

Herminia Morales (CQ_HojaFuentes), a teacher in Chiapas, says that one of the changes she has seen in the educational field is that in the 2011

educational plan the issue of gender began to be included as a priority feature in the programs and inclusive language was introduced, to use the terms "boys and girls" so that today it is normal to name girls.

"Even girls, when they are told in the classroom 'let's see boys' and they say 'we don't', now girls are already aware of their 'childliness', of being women, not of being different," says Morales.

However, in Morales' teaching experience, there have been no awareness-raising programs for teachers.

"It's in the laws, decrees come and go, but they're just that, decrees and there's no training," Morales adds. "There are no big changes, I can't tell you percentages, but from what I can observe, I think there are 10% of teachers who have a certain sensitivity to the issue of gender"

For Figueroa Mier, education continues to be the great issue of prevention, a woman who knows how to read and write.

"Learning to read and write to say your own word, to write your own word in places like Chiapas where the marginalization, the poverty of women, especially if you are a girl, adolescent, indigenous, migrant, undocumented, Guatemalan, you don't know Spanish, you don't have primary school, you don't have a family, your risk of being killed, of losing your life, the fact that they don't take care of you is greater," Figueroa Mier said.

Women who report gender-based violence in Puerto Rico oscillate between their lives and bureaucracy

AGUADA, PUERTO RICO

Crisis contexts aggravate violent environments, as organizations dedicated to the service of women victims of gender-based violence have warned in recent years.

In 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, more than 5,500 complaints of gender-based violence were reported by women,(CQ_link) this led to a declaration of a state of alert by the government of Puerto Rico.(CQ_link) The next two years, 2021 and 2022, more than 12,600 thousand

incidents of domestic violence in total were reported to the Puerto Rico police(CQ_link)

Many other cases remain silent, but this was not the case of Neisha(25), who for more than a year was subjected to the claims of the person with whom she shared a five-year relationship. His cell phone was constantly checked, he had to excuse every outing, and jealousy complaints became a daily affair. He was living in a spiral of violence that worsened.

Between 2021 and Summer 2023, the governor of Puerto Rico declared a state of emergency to order the establishment of measures "aimed at preventing and eradicating this behavior in our society"(CQ_link) Even so, complaints and femicides continue to mark a worrying trend. The Puerto Rico Gender Equity Observatory counts some 194 direct and indirect femicides, from 2021 to the present. (CQ_link)

This scenario and the denunciations of NGOs has encouraged public policy legislation and protocols in Puerto Rico to have more notoriety in recent years. Electronic monitoring of aggressors(CQ_link), activation of a public alert to report missing women (CQ_link), a telephone number to facilitate the reporting of victims(CQ_link), rapid issuance of a license to carry weapons, recognition of femicide as a crime of murder in the first degree(CQ_link) and the recognition of economic violence as a crime are some of the measures implemented in the last four years. All of these have come to complement the "Law for the Prevention and Intervention with Domestic Violence" of 1989, known as Law 54 which typifies related crimes. (CQ_link)

For Coraly León Morales, director of the network of shelters for women survivors of violence in Puerto Rico, these laws are advanced but the mechanism of imposing stronger punishment on the person who commits the crime is not an effective solution to tackle the issue in a practical way, "an aggressor is not thinking about the weight of the law or the possible charges. That doesn't cross his mind," he says, "the element of prevention has been absent and it hasn't been for lack of demand." (CQ_León Morales)

Three years ago Neisha feared for her life and decided to report her case, "that person didn't want to leave my life." The woman went to the nearest police station, with photos as evidence, and reported her case. After that, she was summoned to a command center, a higher ranking department than the first one she had visited, to testify to her experience." I wanted to forget everything," says the 25-year-old, but "I had to see it, I had to

explain everything how it happened, in front of that person," she says of the process that took three months. "My case was taken care of super quickly because that was the reason for the rise in physical abuse," she recalls.

The woman obtained a protective order effective six months. "That's literally a piece of paper, it's not like they (the police) are making sure (the shooter) isn't around or anything like that," she says, "the responsibility was on me."

According to Lisdel Flores, director of Hogar Ruth, a shelter and services center for women survivors of violence, "it is useless to amend the law if there is no coordinated response," according to Flores, follow-up to these cases, preventive rounds and prevention programs are necessary to tackle the problem.

Neisha's aggressor did not stop his acts, he followed her to work, wrote to her, harassed her on social networks. She feared for her life. He didn't go out for a month and he didn't show up to work during that period. Their economic life also became precarious and with it their emotional health.

He returned to the barracks and requested an extension of his protection order for 6 more months. The assailant stopped looking for her. It's been three years since then and Neisha is grateful to be alive with a big smile that narrows her eyes. Last year more than 8,000 women filed for a protective order, only 3,866 got the order. (CQ_link_6)

We are awaiting an official interview from the police

Neisha's first name is Neishali Acevedo Guzmán, she prefers that we only name her as it is written in the text